

**SOCIAL RELATION AND STRATIFICATION REFLECTED IN  
ANTON CHECKOV'S *UNCLE VANYA* DRAMA:  
A MARXIST PERSPECTIVE**



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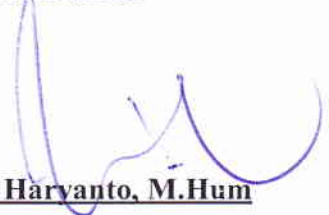
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# **SOCIAL RELATION AND STRATIFICATION REFLECTED IN ANTON CHECKOV'S *UNCLE VANYA* DRAMA: A MARXIST PERSPECTIVE**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This research is descriptive qualitative research. The objectives of the research are to analyze the social relation and stratification reflected in Anton checkov's Uncle Vanya.*

*In this study, the writer applies qualitative research in which the researcher does not need a statistic to collect, to analyze and to interpret data. In brief, qualitative research in the research is employing the method of collecting, describing, classifying, and analyzing the data and then drawing conclusion. By using qualitative method this research is aimed to describe the social relation and stratification of Uncle Vanya drama based on Marxist perspective. The data sources are library and literary data. Its purpose is to analyze using Marxist perspective.*

*After analyzing the Marxist perspective in the drama, the writer completes her study by collecting the elements into unity. The Marxist analyze of the drama will support the research. Anton Checkov generally wants to describe social relation and stratification in the society through Uncle Vanya. The gap between the land owner and the worker at the last of nineteenth century in Russia influences the social relation each other.*

*Keywords: Drama, Social Relation, Stratification, Anton Checkov, Uncle Vanya, Marxist Perspective.*

## A. Introduction

Social relation and stratification are important things in a particular society. They consider that high social level is a winner. They do not want to make social intercourse with the social lower group levels.

In Marx's view the rich is called the bourgeois who is the owner of the production devices like factory, machine and land. Meanwhile the poor is replaced by the term proletarian who is the working class which worked at the rich selling their power to get salary.

In this case, the writer discusses several previous studies. There are by Nefiar Reza Alavi (UMS, 2008) who conducted the study entitled "*Compulsive Drive of Uncle Vanya on Keeping the Trust in Checkov's Uncle Vanya Drama (1896): A Sociological Psychological Approach*". The difference is the perspective used in analyzing the research. This research using Marxist Perspective, while the first previous study using sociological psychological approach.

The Researchers found some journals also talks about *Uncle Vanya*. The studies on Checkov's *Uncle Vanya* can be classified into two categories. The first is from intrinsic elements, like journal by Mark Blankership entitled *Vanya (Fisher Center for the Performing Art)*, Lynn Jacobson entitled *Uncle Vanya*, and Robert L Daniels entitled *Uncle Vanya* discuss about the characters in the *Uncle Vanya* play. Such are the characteristics of professors, Vanya, Helena, and so on. Meanwhile the journal by Anonymous entitled *Love's labour's lost; "Uncle*

*Vanya" in New York*, more talk about plot. How the sequence of events in *Uncle Vanya* play, ranging from exposition to resolution.

The second are discuss about extrinsic elements like journal by Marilyn Stasio entitled *Legit of Broadway Uncle Vanya*, discusses the external factors of the *Uncle Vanya* play as the production process, the state drama competition at the time of the sale, even the character selection/ casting. Besides discussing about external factors, Stasio entitled *Off Broadway Uncle Vanya* talks about the storyline of *Uncle Vanya* plays. The last is Irene Backalenick entitled *Uncle Vanya Reviewed by Irene Backalenick*, discusses drama production of *Uncle Vanya* and little about the state of Russia in terms of marketing a work.

Based on the explanation and the phenomena above, the writer is interested to analyze social relation and stratification and stratification. Thus the research is entitled *Social Relation and Stratification reflected in Anton Checkov's Uncle Vanya Drama: A Marxist Perspective*.

## **B. Research Method**

The type of the research is descriptive qualitative research. The types of data are texts that consist of words, phrases, and sentences. The data are classified into two categories, primary and secondary data: the primary data is the drama of *Uncle Vanya* produced by Moscow Art Theater. While secondary data, are drama or any information related to the practice of social relation and stratification that support the Marxist perspective.

The writer uses documentation as the method of collecting the data, the steps are as follows: the writer reads and observes *Uncle Vanya* text play, the writer looks for the data and writes the data based on its classification, the writer selects the data. The technique of analyzing the data which is used by the researcher is descriptive technique. The steps are as follows: the first is analyzing the data based on its structural elements. Focus will be paid on the structural analysis of the drama. The second step is analyzing the data based on Marxist perspective. Focus will be paid on the meaning of social relation and stratification.

## **C. Research Finding and Discussion**

### **1. Research Finding**

The main research findings are as follows:

#### **A. Dialectical Materialism**

In dialectical materialism the history of society consist of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. This theory depicts the social development process of the lower stage to the higher stage. Thesis as the first stage, then antithesis and synthesis that could be in a high position when have a good starting point.

Thesis comes when Vanya manage the estate with Sonya, and he always thinking about the presence of Serebrakoff who do not care about the technical processes in real and just ask for the result of the estate.

“For twenty-five years I have managed this place, and have sent you the returns from it like the most honest of servants, and you have never given me one single word of thanks for my work” (P: 224).

The second position is anti thesis, it comes when Serebrakoff showed his vanity.

“We used to think of you as almost superhuman, but now the scales have fallen from my eyes and I see you as you are! You write on art without knowing anything about it. Those books of yours which I used to admire are not worth one copper kopeck. You are a hoax!”(P: 225).

The synthesis process is started when Vanya get mad about the professor’s idea to sell the estate. Tense debate going until Vanya wanted to shoot Serebriakoff. Then Helena asked professor apologized and spoke to Vanya.

“For heaven’s sake, Alexander, go and have a talk with him—explain!” (P: 226).

## B. Historical Materialism

In Marxism, Karl Marx always states that condition where the people were materialistic and all what people did was how to gain wealth and prosperity easily, creates polarization in society the oppressor which as known as the capitalist or the bourgeoisie (land owner), and the oppressed which is known as labor or proletariat (the worker).



In *Uncle Vanya* drama, Vanya has different view. He thinks that Serebrakoff is the one who had to be rewarded because he is the brother-in-law. In that period, someone who has an education and has a wealth (land owner) is a ruling. Further, Serebrakoff is very proud of his authority and status. He admits that he is an educated man and he needed of everyone.

“I have spent my life working in the interests of learning. I am used to my library and the lecture hall and to the esteem and admiration of my colleagues...” (P: 195).

Authority makes someone blind of life. When Vanya get mad and refuse the professor's idea, the professor keep trying to state that he is still wanted to sell the estate.

### C. Alienation

Alienation is known as a condition in which a person is separated from himself, his own self, his life, his family and friends, and also his environment.

In *Uncle Vanya*, this condition is shown by Vanya's attitude, when he complained of a wasted life and always thought of negative things about serebrakoff. At that time the professor, his wife, Sonya, and Telegin came from their walked, Vanya told everything about that old professor who married a beautiful young woman. He also told that the professor is suffered from his gout.

“Imagine it, the life of a retired professor, as stale as a piece of hardtack, tortured by gout, head-aches, and rheumatism, his liver bursting with jealousy and envy...”(P: 183).

That alienation is because of Vanya thought his accomplished love to Helena, so that his mind is mess.

#### D. Class Struggle

Frans Magnis-Suseno (2002: 110) states that : “Alienation is a product of a class oppression to the other class. The opportunity of being free from alienation is only achieved by the Class Struggle”.

Class Struggle in *Uncle Vanya* drama is mostly dominated by Vanya from working class who wants to maintain the real property. One way to get it is only fight and stands to keep the estate not to sell. He did everything in debate because that is the only one of his family’s wealth, as implied in the dialogue of the drama;

“Wait! It is clear that until this moment I have never had a grain of sense in my head. I have always been stupid enough to think that the estate belonged to Sonia. My father bought it as a wedding present for my sister, and I foolishly imagined that as our Uncle laws were made for Russians and not Turks, my sister’s estate would come down to her child.” (P: 222).

## 2. Discussion

Based on the research finding, it shows that, first the researcher finds that Anton Checkov in *Uncle Vanya* wants to rebel the social relation and stratification. Anton Checkov’s rebel is shown in his major character’s act and subject matter. In that time, social class tended to make people material oriented, and assumed that social relation should be held on equal

rank in my side. Based on Anton Checkov thought this view is shown in *Uncle Vanya*, that the rights could be keep in everyone own. On the other hand, Anton Checkov also disagreed with the classes in the society, in which the upper class oppressed the lower rank. *Uncle Vanya* drama illustrates the Russian different stratification, and the condition of the lower or working class.

Anton Checkov gives such condition and situation. He criticizes the society condition; why there must be any different class in the society. An educational problems that arise in the discussion of this research is how the human relationships to other human beings, for example, social strata or social relationships. Everything humans did there must be cause and effect. The effect is social inequalities between the characters in the *Uncle Vanya* drama is the relationship among family members becomes not harmonious, otherwise it would raise a conflict.

#### **D. Conclusion**

Anton Checkov generally wants to describe social structure or stratification in the society through *Uncle Vanya*. The gap between the land owner and the worker at the last of nineteenth century in Russia influences the social relation each other. The cultural aspect, which is shown by those differences of daily life is criticized by Anton Checkov.

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